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SOC. 4.01.2 Rush to
Judgment

Back to the Attack

by Alexander M. Bickel

C.I.A. - New Orleans

Mark Lane has written *Son of Rush to Judgment*, and it had better be noticed lest he issue a third work denouncing the conspiracy of silence that was aimed at his second. For this second book is itself a tale of conspiracies Mr. Lane has known, of his difficulties in finding a publisher for *Rush to Judgment*, and the troubles he has seen ever since. It is a trivial and tedious

A Citizen's Dissent
by Mark Lane

(Holt, Rinehart & Winston; \$6.95)

volume, ingeniously detailing Lane's ceaseless assaults on the mass media in search of personal publicity, and rehearsing the minutia with which he overwhelmed this or that opponent in debate on a college campus, or filled the night air on some late, late radio show.

Lane is a master of the nippick, the greatest living purveyor of isolated, inconsequential facts, an unprogrammed computer spitting out perforated index cards in all directions. Facts, of course, little inert facts lying about, are innocent as such; until somebody arranges them in accordance with one or another hypothesis they are quite innocent of meaning and significance. In disarray, they amount to nothing. They are non-truth, and they can easily be untruth. The telling of this sort of non- and untruth is Mr. Lane's art form.

Other people's facts Lane has a way of distorting or omitting. I permit myself to dwell on an illustration that touches me, simply because I know about it. Lane has made a film on the John F. Kennedy assassination, with the same title as his first book, and it had its initial public showing in January 1967 on the BBC in London, on a program on which Lane appeared. Rather separately from Lane, I was on that program also. Together with Lord Devlin, a retired British judge, I was retained to comment on the film and on rebuttals of its proposition offered by two former Warren

Commission lawyers, Arlen Specter and David W. Belin. Lane spends some twelve pages entering his objections to this program. Lord Devlin, he complains, "had served as the almost official salesman for the Warren Report in England. . . ." As for me, "on a smaller scale," he says, I "had tried to serve the Establishment in [my] own country in much the same way." What sort of impartial commentators were we, then? Well, I had written a rather extended critique in *Commentary* in October 1966 entitled, "The Failure of the Warren Report," and just before going over to England I had published in these pages an article calling for a fresh investigation of the Kennedy assassination. Lord Devlin had also expressed in print misgivings about the Warren Report.

But that, if the reader will bear with me, is not the worst of Lane's misrepresentations concerning the BBC's establishmentarian conspiracy against him. It had been agreed that after the film and after the arguments of the Commission lawyers, Lord Devlin and I would have the last word. This annoyed Lane, who wanted time for himself. To show how biased the BBC was against him, he writes that it became plain shortly before the program was due to end that I had a surprise in store, and was going to say that the Commission's single-bullet theory did not satisfy me, and that the Warren Report had not, in my judgment, sufficiently excluded the possibility, however remote, of a second assassin. (I had said as much in print before. But let that pass.) Specter, the Commission lawyer, says Lane, "was livid. The fixed jury was no longer under control." Hence Specter demanded an opportunity to reply. He was allowed to do so. The biased BBC breached in Specter's favor the agreement about who was to have the last word. Yet it made no similar concession to Lane. A telling point, but an unvarnished fabrication. His film spoke for Lane. Specter spoke for the Commission, and

cause the considerations on which I based my judgment had been little remarked earlier. After Specter's final statement, however, I concluded, quite at my leisure, and quite in accordance with the prior agreement. This Lane fails to mention.

One last, unpleasant point. Lane is not above the dirtiest kind of innuendo. His film, he writes, did not fare well at the BBC, "about as well there as it would have had it been premiered in America on the one television station in Austin, Texas, and for much the same reasons, I fear." Again, he says: "For reasons perhaps best understood, but never satisfactorily explained by President Johnson, how-

ever, the photographs and x-rays of President Kennedy's body taken at the autopsy remained unavailable." (The photographs and x-rays were placed under the control of the Kennedy family initially, and are now at the Archives.) Finally, in an underground newspaper, the *Los Angeles Free Press* of April 10, 1968, right among the advertisements of male nudes, "sexercises" and oral love, Lane published an article entitled, "Is Bobby Silent Because the CIA Killed His Brother?" Lane purports to worry about a sickness abroad in the land, and about "our chance for redemption." He is among our causes for worry.